

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected independent claims 6 and 11 based on Sasaki. As will be further discussed below, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's arguments based on Sasaki for at least the reason that Sasaki does not disclose the feature of Applicants' invention where pressure is applied to the molded articles that are to be joined together during the sintering process. In Sasaki, even if Sasaki can in any way be interpreted as disclosing applying a pressure, this application of pressure is not applied to the molded articles that are to be joined together during the sintering process. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that even if Sasaki discloses applying a pressure, Sasaki does not disclose the features of independent claims 6 and 11 of applying pressure to the molded articles that are to be joined together during the sintering process, and thus, claims 6 and 11 are allowable over Sasaki.

As discussed above, Applicants' invention, as claimed, includes the feature of applying a pressure to the molded articles that are to be joined together during the sintering process. Thus, it is during the sintering process, which sintering process is the claimed process that is used to join the molded articles together, when the pressure is applied.

In the Office Action, the Examiner argues that the disclosure in Sasaki where "the assembly" is secured with a threaded nut discloses Applicants' claimed feature of applying pressure to the molded articles "during the sintering process". As discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that even if Sasaki discloses securing the assembly with a threaded nut, that this securing of the assembly with the threaded nut is not applying pressure to the molded articles that are to be joined together during a sintering process, as claimed by Applicants.

In Sasaki, with reference to Fig. 4, in the "assembly" that is secured with a threaded nut, as argued by the Examiner, even if there is pressure applied by the threaded nut, the pressure is not applied during a sintering process, as claimed by Applicants. In Fig. 4, in the "assembly", there is shown a complete

rotor with a ceramic shaft 26', with a ceramic turbine rotor unit 24' integrally sintered to the shaft, with a metallic impeller 34 and with bearings 42, 42' supporting the shaft. The already joined parts 24' and 26' correspond to the details shown in Fig. 3 and are the parts that were previously joined by any sintering process of Sasaki, and thus, joined by sintering prior to any pressure being applied to the “assembly” of Fig. 4. Thus, in the “assembly” of Fig. 4, there is no pressure being applied during any sintering process.

The details on the left side of Fig. 4 only illustrate the known state of the art where a separate metallic impeller 34 is bolted to the shaft 26', with the “applied pressure” of a threaded nut. The impeller 34 is mechanically mounted to the shaft using a threaded section 26'c, the threaded nut 38, and a washer 40. Whereas the connection may be strengthened by adding a heat resisting adhesive material between the shaft and the impeller, there is **no sintering process** used for joining these parts, and thus, any pressure applied by the threaded nut for assembling these parts is not applied during any sintering process, as claimed by Applicants. Again, any sintering process in Sasaki is performed prior to the nut “applying pressure” for joining the impeller 34 to the shaft 26'.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's argument that securing the assembly with a threaded nut is applying a pressure during a sintering process. As discussed above, any sintering process in Sasaki is performed prior to any application of a pressure by the threaded nut, and thus, any application of a pressure by the threaded nut is not applied during a sintering process, as claimed by Applicants. Further in support of Applicants' argument that the nut does not apply any pressure during a sintering process, the nut 38 is only able to create axial forces, but for applying a pressure during a sintering process between the contacting parts 26'b and 34, a radial pressure would be necessary, which cannot be applied by the threaded nut.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that, as discussed above, even if Sasaki discloses applying a pressure, Sasaki does not disclose the features of

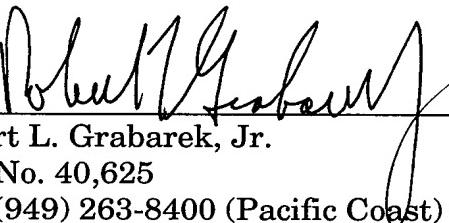
independent claims 6 and 11 of applying pressure to the molded articles that are to be joined together during the sintering process, and thus, claims 6 and 11 are allowable over Sasaki.

Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding this Response or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any such fee or any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket No. 011235.57416US).

Respectfully submitted,

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